

IN THE CLAIMS

Listing of the Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) An apparatus comprising:
 - a first layer having a first at least one interconnect formed in an interlayer dielectric (ILD);
 - a second layer formed over the first layer, the second layer having a second at least one interconnect, and wherein the second layer comprises a first sublayer and a second sublayer, the first sublayer is between the first layer and the second sublayer, and the second sublayer is between the first sublayer and the third layer, the first sublayer comprising an ILD, and the second sublayer comprising air;
 - a third layer formed over the second layer, the third layer defining at least one air gap between the second at least one interconnect and the third layer; and
 - at least one shunt comprising a first material different from a second material of the first and second at least one interconnects selectively covering the top of the first and second at least one interconnects.
2. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1, further comprising a barrier layer to support the first and second at least one interconnects.

3. (Original) The apparatus of claim 2, wherein the barrier layer has a thickness of between 50 and 500 Angstroms.

4. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1, further comprising:
at least one via having a via plug, the via plug is selected from the group consisting of cobalt and nickel.

5. (Original) The apparatus of claim 4, wherein the via plug is deposited using electroless deposition.

6. (Cancelled)

7. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the second at least one interconnect is within the second sublayer.

8. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the second layer comprises air.

9 – 21. (Cancelled)